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ABSTRACT

An alternative high school is proposed to meet the needs of the substantial number of Yuma students who are dropping out of school at increasing rates. In the period from 1974 to 1978 enrollment at Yuma's 2 high schools increased by only 8% while the drop-out rate increased by 56%. Enrollment figures show that the drop-out rate is highest in grade 11 and that the rate for males is nearly twice that for females. When ethnic groups are compared, Mexican American and Anglo groups have the highest drop-out rates. An alternative high school would lower the drop-out rates by offering a program to meet the needs of students who leave school because of attendance, social, or academic problems. The school would feature diagnostic and prescriptive testing, small classes, individually prescribed and competency-based instruction, a major emphasis on the development of fundamental skills, involvement of all students in career and vocational exploration, intensive counseling, career awareness seminars, and GED preparation. It is estimated that approximately 75 students would be eligible for enrollment at the start of the program. Funding for the alternative school is estimated at $150,000 for the first year with additional capital outlay for the facilities and equipment. Appendices contain tables showing enrollment and drop-out figures by age, sex, ethnic group, and school for the period from 1974-1978. (JH)

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RATIONALE

for an

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

serving the

YUMA UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Prepared by

Faculty Committee

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March 30, 1979

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RATIONALE
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INTRODUCTION

The traditional program of studies within the Yuma Union High School District is not meeting the educational needs of a substantial number of students. These students are "dropping out" of school prior to graduation at an increasing rate pointing out a definite problem for this school district. In view of this situation, a proposal for an Alternative School is presented to offer another choice for these identified students. This proposal contains essential ingredients and documentation for a needed alternative program within this district.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

As stated in the Introduction, local studies conducted by a faculty committee demonstrate a serious "drop-out" problem in the Yuma Union High School District. These studies have been compiled over the past six months (October '78 through March '79) from reports made to the North Central Accrediting Association for Secondary Schools and kept on file in the Principals' offices at Kofa and Yuma High Schools respectively. Also, additional information was obtained from the Registrars' offices at the two high schools as well as all of the feeder elementary schools.

Literature relating to the "drop-out" problem at the high school level was obtained from the Arizona Education Information System located in the Bureau of Educational Research at Arizona State University. Journal articles

and microfiche cards were reviewed to get a background on the scope of the problem nation-wide. Existing Alternative School Programs were reviewed as to their effectiveness in providing a high school education other than in a traditional school setting.

National statistics from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's National Center for Education Statistics, (1977) state that approximately 75% of those students in 5th grade in 1968 graduated from high school in 1976. This "drop'out" rate from high school is smaller than it was in the 1930's (about 33% graduated from high school) or the 1950's (about 50% graduated from high school), but is considered high by today's standards for two reasons. One reason is based on the financial reimbursement policies which are determined by average daily attendance of students. The "drop-out" causes a monetary loss to the school district. The second reason is one of social need to educate the citizenry to a higher level in order to cope with the increase in technological progress as well as to serve a delaying factor in the entry of an excessive number of young people into the labor market as possible so that employment opportunities can be maintained for older and more qualified workers.

A review of district figures indicates that enrollment at the two high schools is beginning to decline, or more accurately, not rise as rapidly as it has in the past, while the "drop-out" rate is rising rapidly. In the past four school years, enrollment has increased approximately 8% while the number of "drop-outs" has increased 56%. (See Chart 1) A more detailed look at the figures using grade and sex identification reveals a trend for about twice as many males than females to "drop-out" in proportion to respective enrollment. A sample of 9th grade and 11th grade figures indicates that the number of boys "dropping-out" increased by 75% and 114% respectively while the girls "drop-out" rate was 34% and 62%. Also, a surprising number of students "drop-out" in the 11th grade compared to the other three grade levels (See

Charts 2,3, and 4). It is surprising to observe this phenonenon because "drop-outs" tend to get discouraged early in their high school years (during 9th grade) and then "drop-out" as school is no longer mandatory for them. However, the figures cited demonstrate that a number of Yuma and Kofa students hang on for two years and then "drop-out". The traditional approach, for whatever reasons, is not reaching these students. As the number of "drop-outs" increases, the school district is investing money, energy, and time without much fruition. Funds from the state are not forthcoming for these students who are no longer enrolled, however, facilities, staff, and materials have usually been allocated for these non-attending students. A financial "crunch" occurs if attendance estimates and actual enrollment are off by even small percentages.

An analysis of the ethnic groupings (See Charts 5,6,7) indicates that, over-all, the Mexican-American and Other (predominantly Anglo) categories are the largest. In the last four school years there has been a 16% increase in the Mexican-American student population accompanied by a 66% increase in the number of Mexican-American "drop outs." The Other category, which is mainly Anglos, increased 6% over the same time period with a 53% increase in the number of "drop-outs." Such figures indicate a trend of increasing "drop-outs" in relationship to actual enrollment.

Certain trends at each of the schools indicate ethnic groupings that may be worthy of further study. The Mexican-American enrollment at Yuma High School has increased 27% over the past four school years while the Anglo enrollment (Other) has decreased 14%. At Kofa High School the Mexican-American enrollment has increased 13% while the Anglo (Other) enrollment has increased 18%. The scope of this study does not lend itself to interpretation of these figures.

The trend from figures gathered at the feeder schools (See Chart 8) indicates a decrease in over-all enrollment of 9th graders during the last two school years. Such a trend coupled with the increase in the number of "drop-outs" would indicate a need to find solutions and programs to lower this number as much as possible.

The final two charts (9 & 10) summarize the number of high school graduates compared to 12th grade enrollment and the number of 9th graders entering Yuma High School who graduated as 12th graders. Chart 9 shows that approximately 75% of the 12th graders enrolled actually graduate. Several reasons may exist for this figure; namely, (1) those enrolled as 12th graders but with insufficient credits for graduation, (2) those failing required, or elective, classes which keep them from graduating, (3) those "dropping out", moving, or transferring to another school during the year.

In Chart 10, a study done in the Registrar's Office at Yuma High School, tracked entering 9th graders over three four-year periods (1970-74; 1971-75; 1972-76) to check how many actually graduated. A record was kept of those who transferred, those who "dropped out", and those who graduated. The percentage of "drop outs" over the three study periods was 24%, 26% and 28% respectively. Overall, there was a 27% increase in the number of "drop outs" during this study while 9th grade enrollment increased 8% during the same time. Such a high figure of "drop outs", again, demonstrates the need to initiate a program to lower these figures by assisting these students.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Alternative School is to provide an educational environment for students with attendance, social, or academic problems who have dropped out of school. This program is supportive of the existing schools, yet separate from them, and will offer an alternative to the traditional high school while decreasing discipline problems on campus and lowering the drop-out rates.

GOALS

The major goal for the Alternative School is to assist a student in continuing in an educational setting until high school requirements are satisfied, or skills and attitudes for worthwhile participation in society are developed.

More specific goals include improving the student's educational and basic learning skills; engaging students in a program which will develop a more positive self-image and thus improve personal and social adjustment; involving students in career and vocational exploration; reducing truancy and delinquency among those students enrolled; counseling each student toward a successful placement in the home school, vocational school, or full-time employment; and, providing instructional opportunities for high school graduation when returning to the home school, the GED, and/or job readiness skills.

CURRICULUM/OFFERINGS

Features of the Alternative School include diagnostic and prescriptive testing, small classes, individually prescribed and competency-based instruction, a major emphasis on the development of fundamental skills, involvement of all students in career and vocational exploration, intensive counseling, career awareness seminars, and GED preparation.

Courses may be offered in the following areas: Reading, English, Math, American History and Government, Free Enterprise, Lab Science, Business, Physical Education, Life Skills Seminar, Industrial Arts (in cooperation with the home schools), and Arizona History and Constitution.

ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

To be eligible for enrollment in the Alternative School, a student must meet the following basic criteria: be of high school age (13-20); reside within the Yuma Union High School District attendance area; and, must formally

agree to follow the rules and requirements of the Alternative School. As these students could not be formally accepted into the GED program until they are 17 years of age, they may be enrolled in the basic skills and vocational classes. Active parent/guardian involvement is strongly encouraged as a vital part to the success of the student's program.

The process for enrollment in the Alternative School is suggested as follows:

(1) Application can be made at any time during the year.

(2) The referring agent, parent, or student completes the Alternative School application form. The date of application establishes placement on the waiting list.

(3) Existing records and test data are reviewed. Further testing may be recommended to provide information to the Screening Committee. Screening Committee made up of representatives from the home schools, Alternative School and Administration.

(4) Student and parent/guardian meet with the Screening Committee.

(5) The decision of acceptance is based upon the Alternative School's ability to meet the individual needs of each applicant.

(6) Student and parent/guardian sign contract.

(7) Student begins school.

This program is designed to operate during the regular school year. However, such a program could be extended to operate on a twelve-month basis in order to better serve the needs of the students involved. Students would be officially enrolled at the Alternative School, not at their home school, and should a student complete district graduation requirements at the Alternative School, they may be graduated from their home school.

LOCATION OF FACILITY/STAFFING

It is felt that the physical facility for the Alternative School be separate from any of the existing schools within the Yuma Union High School

District. This allows the staff an opportunity to establish needed structure and guidelines for the benefit of the students. It is suggested that such a program consider utilizing a facility at a location equally accessible to both schools in the district.

Staffing for the Alternative School as evidenced by the research statistics would indicate a need to begin with a minimum of 5 certificated staff. These staff members should be experienced people with background in special areas such as those dealing with emotionally disturbed, drop-outs, possible delinquents, and other behavioral problems. In addition, classroom aides with some experience in dealing with students of a special nature would be necessary to assist staff members. Aides may be supplemented by parent/guardian volunteers who would be encouraged to participate in their child's educational development. It is suggested that a posssible parent/guardian involvement be required (example - one morning or afternoon per week to assist in some specific tasks as developed by the staff at the Alternative School).

It is anticipated that approximately 75 or more students would be eligible for enrollment in the beginning of the program. This number would expand later as facilities, staff, and financial resources permitted.

FUNDING

It is anticipated that funding for an Alternative School serving the Yuma Union High School District will approximate $150,000 for the first year. Capital outlay items related to the building facility and equipment would have to be added to this amount, which depends on availability of facilities within Yuma to meet the needs of the district in this venture.

Funding sources for this program may include local district money; contributions from local agencies; private donations; state funding sources such as Vocational Educational monies, Career Education monies, or the like;

and federal funding sources related to vocational/career education, special programs, etc. Application for such monies needs to be made as soon as possible to insure a base of funds to begin the Alternative School program.

SUMMARY

An Alternative School for the Yuma Union High School District is a positive approach to a most difficult situation related to "problem" students. Truant students often fail classes and are dropped from school. They are typical of students who could benefit from Alternative School. Without this school, drop-out students will be creating problems for the community and themselves. Retaining them in school provides them with the opportunity to receive an education which will help them throughout their lives. If these students can foster positive attitudes toward school, these attitudes will carry over to their children.

The responsibility for the operation of the Alternative School should be under the direction of the Community Education Department within the Yuma Union High School District. This delineation clearly keeps its identity away from the home schools of potential students and permits a greater flexibility in over all operations.

A suggested name for the Alternative School is Yuma's Educational Support System, or the acronym YESS. "YESS there is an alternative!" may be a slogan for this program. The emphasis is on a positive approach by administrative staff, personnel involved, and referring agents.

The Alternative School should be operational as soon as possible as it is vital to the over-all well being of all of our students as well as the community of Yuma.

COMMITTEE REPORT

As interested educators concerned about the well-being of our students we respectfully submit this recommendation for an Alternative School to better serve the needs of the Yuma Union High School District. We feel that such a

program would be a viable and positive approach to the chronic problem, of working with the drop-out student or the student not able to work within the traditional educational setting. Due consideration of this proposal is respecfully requested.

Faculty Committee:

Magdalena Cabrera

Magdalena Cabrera, Counselor

Alan Eddy

Alan Eddy, Counselor

Gay McLaughlin

Gay McLaughlin, Instructor
Special Services

March 30, 1979
Date

APPENDIX

Statistical Charts (1-10)

CHART I

Total Drop-Outs and Total Enrollment

(by grade)

Combined Figures for both Kofa & Yuma High Schools

SCHOOL YEARS	9	10	11	12	TOTALS
1977-78					
Dropout Percentage	12.7%	10.4%	16.1%	10.4%	12.4%
Total Dropouts	161	132	169	100	562
Total Enrolled	1271	1264	1050	963	4548
1976-77					
Dropout Percentage	18.6%	17.6%	16.2%	17.8%	17.6%
Total Dropouts	262	215	185	165	827
Total Enrolled	1411	1222	1142	927	4702
1975-76					
Dropout Percentage	6.8%	10.5%	12.9%	9.8%	9.8%
Total Dropouts	89	119	133	88	429
Total Enrolled	1302	1134	1029	898	4363
1974-75					
Dropout Percentage	7.7%	9.6%	9.2%	7.7%	8.5%
Total Dropouts	98	107	88	67	360
Total Enrolled	1276	1119	955	868	4218

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in the Principals' offices at Kofa and Yuma High Schools.

<u>56.4% increase</u> in no. of dropouts from 1974-75 to 1977-78

<u>7.8% increase</u> in enrollment from 1974-75 to 1977-78

CHART 2

Total Dropouts and Total Enrollment

(by Grade and Sex)

SCHOOL YEARS	9		10		11		12		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
1977-1978	14.6%	10.6%	12.8%	8.1%	20.3%	11.7%	12.9%	7.9%	15.2%	9.6%	12.4%
Total Dropouts	96	65	81	51	109	60	62	38	350	214	562
Total Enrolled	659	612	631	633	538	512	482	481	2312	2238	4548
1976-1977	21%	16.2%	20.3%	14.5%	16.3%	16.1%	17.2%	18.5%	18.9%	16.2%	17.6%
Total Dropouts	147	115	132	83	93	92	89	76	461	366	827
Total Enrolled	701	710	650	572	572	570	516	411	2439	2263	4702
1975-76	7%	6.7%	10.9%	10%	16.5%	8.9%	12.4%	6.9%	11.5%	8.1%	9.8%
Total Dropouts	44	45	69	50	90	43	58	30	261	168	429
Total Enrolled	633	699	632	502	547	482	466	432	2278	2085	4363
1974-1975 (1)	8.7%	6.7%	12%	7.3%	11.1%	7.4%	8.2%	7.3%	10%	7.1%	8.5%
Total Dropouts	55	43	65	42	51	37	36	31	207	153	360
Total Enrolled	635	641	543	576	458	497	441	427	2077	2141	4218

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in the Principals' offices at Kofa and Yuma High Schools.

(1) Records of this type relating specifically to the "Drop-out" are not readily available prior to 1974 as North Central Accrediting Association did not require such information.

CHART 3

(Yuma High School)

Total Dropouts and Total Enrollment

(by Grade and Sex)

SCHOOL YEARS	9		10		11		12		Total		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
1977-1978	10.1%	8.2%	11.8%	7.1%	17.7%	10.5%	14.2%	9.1%	13.3%	8.5%	11%
Total Dropouts	27	20	27	20	42	20	30	19	126	79	205
Total Enrolled	267	244	228	282	237	191	212	208	944	925	1869
1976-1977	10.3%	7.5%	11.3%	5.9%	6.8%	12.1%	9.8%	7.9%	9.6%	8.4%	9%
Total Dropouts	26	24	31	13	17	30	20	16	94	83	177
Total Enrolled	253	318	275	219	251	247	204	203	983	987	1970
1975-1976	3.7%	4.3%	9.3%	5.9%	12.4%	7.9%	11.2%	7.8%	9.1%	6.3%	7.7%
Total Dropouts	9	13	25	12	30	19	23	16	87	60	147
Total Enrolled	246	299	268	204	242	239	205	205	961	947	1908
1974-1975	3.4%	6.3%	9.4%	5.5%	5.7%	7.7%	5.9%	6.7%	6.1%	6.5%	6.3%
Total Dropouts	10	17	25	14	12	16	12	12	59	59	118
Total Enrolled	295	269	265	253	209	209	205	180	974	911	1885

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in the principal's Office - YHS.

CHART 4

(Kofa High School)

Total Dropouts and Total Enrollment

SCHOOL YEARS	9		10		11		12		Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
1977-1978	17.6%	12.2%	13.4%	8.8%	22.3%	12.5%	11.9%	7%	16.3%	10.3%	13.3%
Total Dropouts	69	45	54	31	67	40	32	19	222	135	357
Total Enrolled	392	368	403	351	301	321	270	273	1366	1313	2679
1976-1977	27%	23.2%	26.9%	19.8%	23.7%	19.2%	22.1%	28.8%	25.2%	22.2%	23.8%
Total Dropouts	121	91	101	70	76	62	69	60	367	283	650
Total Enrolled	448	392	375	353	321	323	312	208	1456	1276	2732
1975-1976	9%	8.6%	12.1%	17.8%	19.7%	9.9%	13.4%	6.2%	13.2%	9.5%	11.4%
Total Dropouts	35	32	44	38	60	24	35	14	174	108	282
Total Enrolled	387	370	364	298	305	243	261	227	1317	1138	2455
1974-1975	13.2%	7%	14.4%	8.7%	15.7%	7.3%	10.2%	7.7%	13.4%	7.6%	10.4%
Total Dropouts	45	26	40	28	39	21	24	19	148	94	242
Total Enrolled	340	372	278	323	249	288	236	246	1103	1229	2332

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in the Principal's Office - KHS.

CHART 5

TOTAL DROPOUTS AND TOTAL ENROLLMENT

(by Ethnic Groups)

Figures are combined from both Kofa HS & Yuma HS

SCHOOL YEARS	Blacks	Mex-Amer	Indian	Oriental	Other	Totals
1977-78	7.4%	12.9%	28.1%	0%	12.2%	12.4%
Total Dropouts	9	224	9	0	320	562
Total Enrolled	121	1745	32	24	2629	4548
1976-77	5.7%	18%	21.4%	7.1%	12%	17.6%
Total Dropouts	9	303	6	1	508	827
Total Enrolled	158	1686	28	14	2816	4702
1975-76	3.7%	10.4%	18.5%	0%	10%	9.8%
Total Dropouts	5	148	5	0	271	429
Total Enrolled	134	1427	27	21	2714	4323
1974-75	10.9%	9.2%	7%	0%	8.4%	8.5%
Total Dropouts	15	135	3	0	209	362
Total Enrolled	138	1472	43	39	2477	4169

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in Principals' Offices at both schools.

"Mex-American" "drop-outs" increased by 66% over 4 yrs.

"Other" "drop-outs" increased by 53% over 4 yrs.

CHART 6

(Yuma High School)

Total Dropouts and Total Enrollment

(by Ethnic Groups)

SCHOOL YEARS	Blacks	Mex-Amer	Indian	Oriental	Other	Totals
1977-78	7.7%	11%	5.9%	0%	11.5%	11%
Total Dropouts	8	88	1	0	108	205
Total Enrolled	104	800	17	10	938	1869
1976-1977	5.6%	11%	0%	0%	8.2%	9%
Total Dropouts	8	84	0	0	85	177
Total Enrolled	143	765	16	10	1036	1970
1975-1976	4.3%	8.1%	8.3%	0%	8%	7.7%
Total Dropouts	5	53	1	0	88	147
Total Enrolled	117	656	12	16	1097	1908
1974-1975	12.3%	7%	11%	0%	5.2%	6.3%
Total Dropouts	15	44	2	0	57	118
Total Enrolled	122	632	18	19	1094	1885

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in Principal's office - YHS

CHART 7

(Kofa High School)

Total Dropouts and Total Enrollment

(by Ethnic Groups)

SCHOOL YEARS	Blacks	Mex-Amer	Indian	Oriental	Other	Totals
1977-78	4.8%	14.4%	53.5%	0%	12.5%	13.3%
Total Dropouts	1	136	8	0	212	357
Total Enrolled	21	945	15	7	1691	2679
1976-1977	6.7%	23.8%	50%	25%	23.8%	23.8%
Total Dropouts	1	219	6	1	423	650
Total Enrolled	15	921	12	4	1780	2732
1975-1976	0%	12.3%	26.7%	0%	11.1%	11.4%
Total Dropouts	0	95	4	0	183	282
Total Enrolled	17	771	15	5	1647	2455
1974-1975	0%	10.8%	.4%	0%	10.5%	10.4%
Total Dropouts	0	91	1	0	150	242
Total Enrolled	16	840	25	20	1431	2332

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in Principal's office - KHS.

CHART 8

Number of 8th Grade Graduates From Feeder Schools

Schools/Graduates

SCHOOL YEARS	(1) Yuma Dist #1	(2) Crane	Somerton	Gadsden	(3) Other	Totals
1977-1978	668	268	143	62	61	1202
1976-1977	701	272	110	58	75	1216
1975-1976	773	270	151	60	66	1320
1974-1975	789	196	131	45	50	1211
1973-1974	768	226	86	45	45	1170

Source: The district office, or school itself, for each area.

(1) Yuma Dist #1 includes Fourth Avenue Junior High, Woodard Junior High, and Gila Vista Junior High.

(2) Crane includes Rancho, Viejo, Pueblo, and Suverkrup Schools.

(3) Other includes St. Francis School, Immaculate Conception School, and Yuma Lutheran.

CHART 9

Number of High School Graduates and 12th Grade Enrollment

SCHOOL YEARS	TOTAL GRADS / TOTAL ENROLLED	KOFA HS	YUMA HS	TOTALS	PERCENTAGE GRADUATING
1977-1978	Graduates	432	286	718	
	12th Gr. Enroll	543	420	963	74.6%
1976-1977	Graduates	445	294	739	
	12th Gr. Enroll	520	407	927	79.7%
1975-1976	Graduates	408	280	688	
	12th Gr. Enroll	488	410	398	76.6%
1974-1975	Graduates	336	311	647	
	12th Gr. Enroll	482	385	868	74.5%

Source: North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports on file in the Principals' Offices at YHS & KHS.

CHART 10

(Yuma High School)

Number of High School Graduates Who Entered As 9th Graders

ITEMS	Years (Entered & Graduated) 1970-1974	1971-1975	1972-1976
Enrolled as 9th Graders (1)	487	505	525
Transfer to other school	77	65	98
Drop Out	116	129	147
Graduated (2)	294	311	280
Percentage: Dropout to 9th Gr.	24%	26%	28%

Source: Registrar's Office at Yuma High School and North Central Accrediting Assoc. reports (2) on file in the Principal's office - YHS.